

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Reed
Booker	Grassley	Reid
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Boxer	Heinrich	Rounds
Brown	Heitkamp	Rubio
Burr	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Sasse
Capito	Hoeven	Schatz
Cardin	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Isakson	Scott
Casey	Johnson	Sessions
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Markey	Tillis
Cornyn	McCaskill	Udall
Cotton	McConnell	Warner
Daines	Menendez	Warren
Donnelly	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Wyden
Ernst	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—11

Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Kirk	Portman	Vitter
Lee	Risch	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, Sanders amendment No. 323 is pending, and Senators should expect a vote in relation to that amendment at 12 noon tomorrow, with at least one additional rollcall vote in the stack before lunch.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. Con. Res. 11 tomorrow morning, there be 38 hours of debate time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina.

ISRAEL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I raise an issue before the body. I don't know how accurate the press reports are, but apparently the Chief of Staff of President Obama, Mr. McDonough, today spoke in town to a group called J Street, which is an organization supportive of the United States-Israel relationship, apparently. Here is what he allegedly said. He basically said that an occupation that has lasted more than 50 years must end.

So the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States, speaking in Washington today, called the Israeli presence in the West Bank an occupation. The Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is looking at a world completely different than the one I am viewing.

I ask Mr. McDonough and President Obama: Don't you realize the last time Israel withdrew in the Mideast—a Palestinian-controlled territory—was the withdrawal from Gaza and that when Israel voluntarily left Gaza, Hamas took over Gaza?

They are a terrorist organization and they fired up to 10,000 rockets from Gaza into Israel. Today, Israel has a presence in the West Bank. Today, Israel is surrounded by radical Islamists, unlike at any time I can remember.

The language used by the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is exactly what Hamas uses. So now our administration is taking up the language of a terrorist organization to describe our friends in Israel.

Here is a question to the American people: Would you withdraw from the West Bank, given the situation that exists today on the ground between the Israelis and the rest of the region?

Would you at this moment in Israel's history completely withdraw from the West Bank, given the experience in Gaza?

Does anybody on the left think that is a good idea? Does anybody in Israeli politics agree with the characterization of the Chief of Staff of President Obama? Does Mr. Herzog or anyone else in opposition to Prime Minister Netanyahu agree with this characterization? Is your country occupying the West Bank or are you there to make sure the West Bank doesn't turn into Gaza?

I talked with the Prime Minister Saturday and I congratulated him on a decisive victory and I look forward to working with him. He told me very clearly that he believes a two-state solution is not possible as long as the Palestinian Authority embraces Hamas, which controls the Gaza strip and is a terrorist organization by any reasonable definition.

With whom do you make peace, Mr. President? What kind of deal can you make when almost half the Palestinian people are in the hands of a terrorist organization who vow to destroy you every day? What kind of deal is that?

So do I want a two-state solution? Yes, I would like a two-state solution, where the Palestinians recognize the right of Israel to exist and they have the ability to chart their own destiny. They are not anywhere near there. The Palestinian community is broken into two parts. The Hamas terrorist organization controls the essential part of the Palestinian community. They will not recognize Israel's right to exist. They are using the territory they hold as a launching pad for attacks against Israel routinely. These are the people who launch rockets from schoolyards and apartment buildings trying to blame Israel for being the bad guy when they respond.

All I can say is when I thought it couldn't get worse, it has. When I thought we couldn't reach a new low in terms of this White House's view of the Mideast, we found a way to reach a new low. Today, the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States used language to describe Israel that has been reserved for terrorist organizations up until now.

So, Mr. McDonough, President Obama, you are completely delusional about the world as it is. You are negotiating with an Iranian regime, and in the President's New Year's greeting he called on the Iranian people to speak out in support of a nuclear deal. Mr. President, don't you understand that in Iran you can't speak out; that if you do speak out and petition your government you can get shot or put in jail? You don't understand that? You are talking to people as if they have a voice. You are talking about the regime as if they are some kind of rational actor.

In that same New Year's greeting, the President complimented the regime, headed up by the Ayatollahs, as

being cooperative in terms of their nuclear negotiations with the P5+1. What the President didn't mention is that this very regime that is spreading terror, unlike at any time in recent memory, is involved in the toppling of four Arab capitals. They are wreaking havoc on the neighborhood. As we are negotiating on their nuclear deal, they are still the largest state sponsor of terrorism. They called for death to America 2 days ago.

So I say to the Obama administration: Wake up and change your policies before you set the whole world on fire. Please watch your language because our best ally in the region, the State of Israel, does not deserve the label of "occupier," given the facts on the ground, and they do not deserve to hear from the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States language that is usually reserved for a terrorist organization.

So when I thought it couldn't get any worse, it has. Let me put the Obama administration on notice. You may not like the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu won, but he did, and here is what you need to understand. If you are recalculating the administration's support for Israel in terms of how you handle resolutions in the United Nations, you need to understand that Congress will recalculate how we relate to the United Nations if you stand on the sidelines and let the U.N. take over the peace process.

There will be a bipartisan, violent backlash in this body if the Obama administration does not veto a U.N. resolution defining the peace process in the Security Council, avoiding direct negotiations between the parties. I am here to say that one of the casualties of a haphazard foreign policy could be the relationship between the United Nations and the Congress. I promise there is bipartisan support in this body for two things: to stand firmly with Israel and not to allow the U.N. Security Council to take over the peace process in defining the terms of a deal.

Secondly, if there is a deal with the Iranians over their nuclear program, if this administration takes that deal to the U.N. Security Council, bypassing Congress and not coming to us first, there will become a great backlash regarding that move.

So I say to the Obama administration: Israel is not the problem. The Israeli people have not killed one American soldier. The Israeli people are in a dispute about their survival with the Palestinian people. The Israeli people gave land to the Palestinians, and in return they got 10,000 rockets, and you want them to do it again. Can't you understand why Israel may not want to withdraw from the West Bank given the history of Gaza? If you can't, you are completely blind to the world as it is, and your hatred and your disgust and your disdain for the Prime Minister has clouded your judgment.

So to our friends in Israel I say: There can only be one Commander in

Chief, and that is the way it should be. But there are 535 of us in the House and the Senate and we do have your back. We will not sit on the sidelines and watch this rhetoric enacted in a manner that would put you at risk beyond what you already are in terms of risk.

This is a low point for me; that an administration, the Chief of Staff of an American President, would use this language, but it fits into an overall pattern that I think is very destructive. So I say to President Obama and Mr. McDonough: Your foreign policy is not working. If you don't get that, then God help us all because what you are doing in the Mideast is not working. You are making everything worse, and now you have added fuel to the fire.

I hope there will be some self-correction at the White House; that we will not take this rhetoric any further than we have today; that there will be a re-evaluation of whether it is appropriate to call the Israeli people occupiers, given the facts on the ground. Only time will tell.

I do understand this, without any hesitation. There are many of us in this body who will not put up with this. We will push back. Israel has not killed one U.S. soldier. Israel hasn't toppled any of their neighbors. Israel doesn't chant "Death to America." You may not like the outcome of the Israeli election, but it was up to the Israeli people to decide, and they have decided.

All of us got into this body the same way—people at home voted for us. Under our Constitution, we have an equal voice to that of the President in terms of checks and balances. Even though he is the leader of America's foreign policy and the Commander in Chief, we do have the right to speak on such matters. So here is my voice, and I think I speak for many on both sides of the aisle when I say to the Israeli people: Do what you have to do to defend the Jewish State. To the President of the United States and Mr. McDonough: The language you used today is very unhelpful and, quite frankly, disconnected from reality.

I will end with this. Would any Member of this body, if they were in Israeli leadership, withdraw from the West Bank, given what is going on in the region? Would any Member of this body be as restrained in responding to a rocket attack coming from a neighbor as Israel has been restrained? What would we do if some terrorist organization next door to us launched a rocket trying to kill our children? Would we be as restrained as our Israeli friends? I doubt it.

I am asking this body to walk a mile in the shoes of the Israeli people and understand why this statement is so offensive and has usually been reserved by the leader of the free world to describe terrorist organizations.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mrs. ERNST pertaining to the introduction of S. 841 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ERNST

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I congratulate the new Senator from Iowa, not only for her service in America's military for all of these years, but also for her service now in the Senate. She is obviously bringing to the Senate real expertise about the needs she addressed in her first piece of legislation. I expect it will enjoy broad bipartisan support, particularly with the sponsor having such firsthand knowledge of the needs of these returning veterans.

So on behalf of all Members of the Senate, I congratulate the Senator from Iowa for her new bill and for her first remarks.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, has now been awaiting a vote on the Senate floor for 25 days. I have spoken many times about her historic nomination, her inspiring family, and her passion for the highest callings of public service.

Last week, a distinguished group of bipartisan law enforcement officials came together to call for the confirmation of Loretta Lynch. These individuals have dedicated the better part of their careers to protecting the American people, and they conveyed how important it is to have the Senate confirm the chief law enforcement officer in the country.

One of those individuals is my friend, Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI and a Federal judge. Director Freeh wrote to the committee in support of Loretta Lynch that "[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America's chief law enforcement officer." He has further stated that "Ms. Lynch is an atypically non-political appointment for that office, a career professional without any political party ties or activity."

Loretta Lynch is also supported by the current New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Democrat, and a former New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Republican. She has earned the support of former U.S. attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations. She has the support of the Major